

631101
L E T T E R

FROM

W I L L I A M P E N N,

T O

His W I F E and C H I L D R E N.

Written a little before his first Voyage to *America*, and found after his Death, amongst some old Manuscripts, never published.

WHITEHAVEN: Printed by J. WARE & SON.

M,DCC,LXXX,VI.

EULOGIUM on the AUTHOR.

*T*HERE is a pathetic, elegant, and sententious simplicity in the writings of great and good men, singularly expressive of that sweetness, harmony, and uniformity of conduct which accompanies them through life, and which I take to be the result of conscious goodness and exalted virtue. The perusal of such writings affords more pleasure than the pompous display of rhetorical flourishes, and refined, elaborate periods. The sentiments contained in the following letter are not studied, novel, or sublime, but simple, sincere, and natural, adapted to the occasion, flowing from the heart; and consonant with the rules of true epistolary writing. Mr. Penn (as is observed of Shakespeare) appears not so properly to speak from Nature, as she speaks through him. Whether we view this great man in the light of a Legislator, Historian, or Chronologist, we must allow he had great extent of knowledge, accuracy of judgment, and quickness of invention; and I think it but justice to his memory to observe that, in all his writings, the Gentleman, Scholar, and Christian, are eminently conspicuous. He appears to have had a truer sense of Religion than was common to the genius of the times in which he lived.

PHILALETHERS.

OXFORDSHIRE, Nov. 7, 1760.

LETTER from W. PENN.

Dear Wife and Children,

MY Love, that sea nor land, nor death itself can extinguish or lessen towards you, most endearedly visits you with eternal embraces, and will abide with you for ever; and may the God of my life watch over you, and bless you, and do you good in this world, and for ever. Some things are upon my spirit to leave with you, in your respective capacities; as I am to one a husband, and to the rest a father, if I should never see you more in this world.

My dear wife, remember thou wast the love of my youth, and much the joy of my life; the most beloved as well as most worthy of all my earthly comforts: and the reason of that love was more thy inward, than thy outward excellencies (which yet were many.) God knows, and thou knowest it, I can say it was a match of Providence's making; and God's image in us both was the first thing, and the most amiable and engaging ornament in our eyes. Now I am to leave thee,

and that without knowing whether I shall ever see thee more in this world, take my counsel into thy bosom, and let it dwell with thee in my stead while thou livest.

1st. Let the fear of the Lord, and a zeal and love of his glory, dwell richly in thy heart; and thou wilt watch for good over thyself and thy dear children and family, that no rude, light, or bad thing be committed: else God will be offended, and he will repent himself of the good he intends thee and thine.

2dly. Be diligent in meetings of worship and business; stir up thyself and others herein; 'tis thy day and place; and let meetings be kept once a day in the family, to wait upon the Lord, who has given us much time for ourselves: and my dearest, to make thy family matters easy to thee, divide thy time, and be regular; 'tis easy and sweet; thy retirement will afford thee to do it: as in the morning to view the business of the house, and fix it as thou desirest, seeing all
A be

be in order; that by thy counsel all may move, and to thee render an account every evening. The time for work, for walking, for meals, may be certain, at least as near as may be; and grieve not thyself with careless servants, they will disorder thee; rather pay them, and let them go, if they will not be better by admonitions: this is best, to avoid many words, which I know wound the soul and offend the Lord.

3dly. Cast up thy income, and see what it daily amounts to; by which thou mayest be sure to have it in thy sight, and power to keep within compass: and I beseech thee to live low and sparingly, till my debts are paid; and then enlarge as thou findest it convenient. Remember thy mother's example, when thy father's public-spiritedness had worsened his estate (which is my case.) I know thou lovest plain things, and art averse to the pomp of the world; a nobility natural to thee. I write not as doubtful, but to quicken thee, for my sake; to be more vigilant herein; knowing that God will bless thy care, and thy poor children and thee for it. My mind

is wrapt up in a saying of thy father's, 'I desire not riches, but 'to owe nothing;' and truly that is wealth; and more than enough to live, is a snare attended with many sorrows. I need not bid thee be humble, for thou art so; nor meek and patient, for it is much of thy natural disposition: but I pray thee, be oft in retirement with the Lord, and guard against encroaching friendships. Keep them at arm's end; for it is giving away our power, aye and self too, into the possession of another; and that which might seem engaging in the beginning, may prove a yoke and burthen too, hard and heavy in the end.—Wherefore, keep dominion over thyself, and let thy children, good meetings, and friends, be the pleasure of thy life.

4thly. And now, my dearest, let me recommend to thy care my dear children; abundantly beloved of me as the Lord's blessings, and the sweet pledges of our mutual and endearing affection. Above all things, endeavour to breed them up in the love of virtue, and that holy plain way of it which we have lived in, that
the

the world, in no part of it, get into my family. I had rather they were homely than finely bred, as to outward behaviour; yet I love sweetness mixed with gravity, and cheerfulness tempered with sobriety. Religion in the heart leads into this true civility, teaching men and women to be mild and courteous in their behaviour; an accomplishment worthy indeed of praise.

5thly. Next breed them up in a love one of another; tell them, 'tis the charge I left behind me; and that 'tis the way to have the love and blessing of God upon them: also what his portion is who hates, or calls his brother fool. Sometimes separate them, but not long, and allow them to send and give each other small things, to endear one another with. Once more, I say, tell them it was my counsel, they should be tender and affectionate one to another. For their learning be liberal; spare no cost; for by such parsimony all is lost that is saved; but let it be useful knowledge, such as is consistent with truth and godliness, not cherishing a vain conversation or idle mind,

but ingenuity mixed with industry is good for the body and mind too. I recommend the useful parts of mathematics; as building houses or ships, measuring, surveying, dialing, navigation, &c. but agriculture is especially in my eye; let my children be husbandmen and housewives; 'tis industrious, healthy, honest, and of good example: like Abraham, and the holy ancients, who pleased God and obtained a good report. This leads to consider the works of God and Nature, of things that are good, and diverts the mind from being taken up with the vain arts and inventions of a luxurious world. 'Tis commendable in the princes of Germany, and nobles of that empire, that they have all their children instructed in some useful occupation. Rather keep an ingenious person in the house to teach them, than send them to schools; too many evil impressions being commonly received there. Be sure to observe their genius, and don't cross it as to learning: let them not dwell too long on one thing, but let their change be agreeable, and all their diversions have some little body

labour in them. When grown big, have most care for them; for then there are more snares both within and without. When marriageable see that they have worthy persons in their eye, of good life, and good fame for piety and understanding. I need no wealth but sufficiency; and be sure their love be dear, fervent and mutual, that it may be happy for them. I chuse not they should be married into earthly covetous kindred; and of cities and towns of concourse beware; the world is apt to stick close to those who have lived and got wealth there; a country life and estate I like best for my children. I would prefer a decent mansion of an hundred pounds per annum, before ten thousand pounds in London, or such like place, in a way of trade. In fine, my dear, endeavour to breed them dutiful to the Lord, and his blessed light, truth and grace in their hearts, who is their Creator; and his fear will grow up with them. Teach a child, (says the wise man) the way thou wilt have him to walk, and when he is old he will not forget it. Next, obedience to thee, their

dear mother; and that not for wrath, but for conscience sake: liberal to the poor, pitiful to the miserable, humble and kind to all: and may my God make thee a blessing, and give thee comfort in our dear children; and in age, gather thee to the joy and blessedness of the just (where no death shall separate us) for ever.

And now, my dear children, that are the gifts and mercies of the God of your tender father; hear my counsel, and lay it up in your hearts; love it more than treasure, and follow it, and you shall be blessed here and happy hereafter.—In the first place, remember your Creator in the days of your youth. It was the glory of Israel in the 2d of Jeremiah, and how did God bless Josiah because he feared him in his youth; and so he did Jacob, Joseph and Moses. O! my dear children, remember, and fear, and serve him who made you, and gave you to me and your dear mother, and that you may live to him, and glorify him, in your generations. To do this, in your youthful days seek after the Lord, that you may find him; remembering his great love in creating

ting you ; that you are not beasts, plants, or stones ; but that he has kept you and given you his grace within, and substance without, and provided plentifully for you. This remember in your youth, that you may be kept from the evil of the world : for, in age, it will be harder to overcome the temptations of it. Wherefore, my dear children, eschew the appearance of evil, and love and cleave to that in your hearts, that shews you evil from good, and tells you when you do amiss, and reproves you for it. It is the light of Christ, that he has given you for your salvation : if you do this, and follow my counsel, God will bless you in this world, and give you an inheritance in that, which shall never have an end. For the light of Jesus is of a purifying nature ; it seasons those who love it, and take heed to it ; and never leaves such, till it has brought them to the city of God, that hath foundations. O ! that ye may be seasoned with the gracious nature of it ; hide it in your hearts, and flee, my dear children, from all youthful lusts ; the vain sports, pastimes, and pleasures of

the world ; redeeming the time because the days are evil. You are now beginning to live—what would some give for your time. Oh ! I could have lived better, were I as you, in the flower of youth. Therefore, love and fear the Lord, keep close to meetings ; and delight to wait upon the Lord God of your father and mother, among his despised people, as we have done ; and count it your honour to be members of that society, and heirs of that living fellowship which is enjoyed among them — for the experience of which your father's soul blesteth the Lord for ever.

Next be obedient to your dear mother, a woman whose virtue and good name is an honour to you ; for she has been exceeded by none in her time for her plainness, integrity, industry, humility, virtue, and good understanding : qualities not usual among women of her worldly condition and quality. Therefore honour and obey her, my dear children, as your mother, and your father's love and delight : nay, love her too, for she loved your father with a deep and upright love, choosing him

him before all her many suitors : and though she be of a delicate constitution and noble spirit, yet she descended to the utmost tenderness and care for you ; performing the painfulllest acts of service to you in your infancy, as a mother and a nurse too. I charge you before the Lord, honour and obey, love and cherish your dear mother.

Next betake yourselves to some honest, industrious course of life ; and that not of sordid covetousness, but for example, and to avoid idleness. — And, if you change your condition and marry, chuse with the knowledge and consent of your mother, if living, guardians, or those that have the charge of you ; mind neither beauty nor riches, but the fear of the Lord, and a sweet and amiable disposition ; such as you can love above all the world : and that may make your habitations pleasant and desirable to you. And being married, be tender, affectionate, and patient, and meek. Live in the fear of the Lord, and he will bless you and your offspring. Be sure to live within compass ; borrow not, neither be beholden to

any : ruin not yourselves by kindness to others, for that exceeds the due bounds of friendship : neither will a true friend expect it. Small matters I heed not. Let your industry and parsimony go no farther than for a sufficiency for life ; and to make a provision for your children (and that in moderation, if the Lord gives you any.) I charge you to help the poor and needy ; let the Lord have a voluntary share of your income, for the poor, both in our society and others : for we are all his creatures, remembering that “ he that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord.” Know well your incomings, that your outgoings may be the better regulated. Love not money, nor the world, use them only and they will serve you : but if you love them, you serve them ; which will debase your spirits as well as offend the Lord. Pity the distressed, and hold out a hand of help to them ; it may be your case : and as you mete to others, God will mete to you again. Be humble and gentle in your conversation, — of few words, I charge you, but always pertinent when you speak : hearing out

out before you attempt to answer; and then speaking as if you would persuade, not impose. Affront none, neither revenge the affronts that are done to you; but forgive and you shall be forgiven of your Heavenly Father.—In making friends, consider well first; and when you are fixed, be true; not wavering by reports, nor deserting in affliction: for that becomes not the good and virtuous. Watch against anger, neither speak nor act in it: for like drunkenness, it makes a man a beast; and throws people into desperate inconveniences. Avoid flatterers, for they are thieves in disguise;—their praise is costly, designing to get by those they bespeak; they are the worst of creatures; they lye to flatter, and flatter to cheat:—and, which is worse, if you believe them, you cheat yourselves most dangerously. But the virtuous, though poor, love, cherish, and prefer. Remember David, who, asking the Lord “Who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?” answers, — “He that walketh uprightly, worketh righteousness, and speaketh the

“truth in his heart: in whose eyes the vile person is contemned, but honoureth them who fear the Lord.” Next, my dear children, be temperate in all things: in your diet, for that is physic by prevention; it keeps, nay it makes people healthy, and their generation sound. This is exclusive of the spiritual advantage it brings. Be also plain in your apparel; keep out that lust, which reigns too much over some; let your virtues be your ornaments; remembering, life is more than food, and the body than raiment. Let your furniture be simple and cheap; avoid pride, avarice and luxury. Read No Cross, No Crown! * There are instructions. Make your conversation with the most eminent for wisdom and piety; and shun all wicked men, as you hope for the blessing of God, and the comfort of your father’s living and dying prayers. Be sure you speak no evil of any, no not of the meanest; much less of your superiors; or

* The title of a book of his; in which his religious sentiments are recorded in a style easy, concise and nervous: his reflections interesting; his arguments for the most part just; and generally enforced by illustrations from Scripture.

magil-

magistrates, guardians, tutors, teachers, and elders in Christ.

Be no busy bodies, meddle not with other folks matters, but when in conscience and duty pressed; for it procures trouble, and is ill manners, and very unseemly to wise men. In your families remember Abraham, Moses, and Joshua, their integrity to the Lord, and do as you have them for your examples. Let the fear and service of the living God be encouraged in your houses, and that plainness, sobriety, and moderation, in all things, as becometh God's chosen people: and, as I advise you, my beloved children, do you counsel yours, if God should give you any. Yea, I counsel and command them as my posterity, that they love and serve the Lord God with an upright heart; that he may bless you and yours, from generation to generation. And, as for you, who are likely to be concerned in the government of Pennsylvania, and my parts of East Jersey, especially the first, I do charge you, before the Lord God and his holy Apostles, that you be lowly, diligent, and tender; fearing God, loving the

people, and hating covetousness. Let justice have its impartial course, and the law free passage, though to your loss protect no man against it: for you are not above the law, but the law above you. Live therefore, the lives yourselves, you would have the people live; and then you have right and boldness to punish the transgressor. — Keep upon the *Square*, for God sees you; therefore do your duty: and be sure you see with your own eyes, and hear with your own ears. Entertain no lurchers, cherish no informers for gain or revenge: use no tricks, fly to no devices, to support or cover injustice: but let your hearts be upright before the Lord, trusting in him above the contrivances of men, and none shall be able to hurt or supplant.

Oh the Lord is a strong God, and he can do whatsoever he pleases: and though men consider it not, it is the Lord that rules and overrules in the kingdoms of men: and he builds up and pulls down. I, your father, am the man that can say, he that trusts in the Lord, shall not be confounded. But God, in due time, will make his enemies

enemies be at peace with him. If you thus behave yourselves, and so become a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well, God, my God, will be with you, in wisdom and a sound mind: and make you blessed instruments in his hand, for the settlement of some of those desolate parts of the world, — which my soul desires above all worldly honours and riches; both for you that go, and you that stay; you that govern, and you who are governed: that in the end you may be gathered with me to the rest of God. Finally, my children, love one another with a true and endeared love, and your dear relations on both sides: and take care to preserve a tender affection in your children to each other: often marrying within yourselves, so as it be without the bounds forbidden in God's law. That so they may not, like the forgetting and unnatural world, grow out of kindred, and as cold as strangers; but as becomes a truly natural, and Christian stock: you and yours after you, may live in

the pure and fervent love of God towards one another, as becometh brethren in the spiritual and natural relation. So my God, that has blessed me with his abundant mercies, both of this and the other and better life, be with you all; guide you by his counsel, bless you, and bring you to his eternal glory: that you may shine, my dear children, in the firmament of God's power, with the blessed spirits of the just: that celestial family, praising and admiring him the God and Father of it, for ever and ever. For there is no God like unto him, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; the God of the Prophets, the Apostles, and Martyrs of Jesus; in whom I live for ever. — So farewell to my thrice dearly beloved wife and children. Yours, as God pleaseth in that which no waters can quench, no time forget, nor distance wear away; but remains for ever,

WILLIAM PENN.

*Worminghurst, 4th
sixth month, 1682.*

the pure and fervent love of God
towards one another as brethren
brother in the spiritual and
mutual relation. So my God, that
hath blessed me with the abundance
mercies, both of this and the
other and better life, be with you
all: guide you by his counsel,
bless you, and bring you to his
eternal glory: that you may think
my dear children, in the ful-
fillment of God's power, with the
blessed spirits of the just, that
ecclesial family, praying and in-
voking him the God and Father
of us ever and ever. For these
are the God of Abraham, Isaac,
of Jacob, of the God of the
the Apostles, and Martyrs of Je-
sus: in whom I live for ever—
be present to my three dear
beloved children, in whom I live
as God blessed in the world, and
waters can purify, no thing for-
get, nor distance wear away: but
remain for ever.

WILLIAM PENN.

enemies be at peace with him.
If you thus behave yourselves,
and to become a father to evil
doers, and a pacifier to them that
do well, God, my God, will be
with you, in wisdom and a sound
mind: and make you blessed in
instruments in his hand, for the
fulfillment of some of those de-
sires of the world, which
my soul desires above all worldly
honours and riches: better for you
that go, and you that stay: you
that govern, and you who are go-
verned: that in the end you may
be gathered with me to the re-
ward of glory. Truly, my dear
children, I have a regard
to your love, and your desires:
I have a tender affection
to you in relation to each other:
I am mourning within myself,
as the dew upon the ground,
that I am in God's love. That
I may not, like the forget-
ful and forgetful world, grow
old or be old, and yet cold as
ice, I have become a father
to you, and God's love: you
and yours after you, may live in